a railway or road connecting Eritrea with Italian Somaliknd.
The intention was excellent, but it was like offering crumbs to a hungry wolf, and the kst thing that the Duce desired was to see Abyssinia in control of a port. A more serious attempt to keep the peace was made in August, when the British and French Governments worked out a plan with the consent of the Emperor, who was prepared for some sort of League control, an exchange of territories, and economic concessions including a railway connecting Italy's two colonies. It was, however, promptly rejected by Mussolini, who was only waiting for the end of die summer rains. When the threat to Abyssinia was at kst considered by the League at its annual meeting in September, the time for preventive action had passed. The ingenious attempt of a Commissiaii of five, envisaging international assistance and enlarging the Paris scheme of territorial cessions, was accepted by the Emperor as a basis of discussion but rejected by theJDuce.

The; British Government and people could no longer evade a decision on the most dangerous issue that had arisen since 1918. On the one hand they desked to honour their obligations under the Covenant: on the other they longed to avoid war. If they resisted aggression the conflict might involve the greater part of Europe : if they stood aside the League would be discredited and die habit of aggression would grow. A Cabinet meeting on August 22 attempted to find a middle path. The closing of the Suez Canal, which might have saved Abyssinia, was ruled out as involving the certainty of war and going beyond the wishes of France. Economic sanctions were to be applied, but not of a kind to goad Mussolini into war. This resolve to limit our liability remained a secret, and it was widely believed that we should stand firm.

The Mediterranean fleet was reinforced and France, with other Mediterranean states, was asked for a promise of support if it were attacked by Italy. While Turkey, Greece and Jugoskvia responded, France, determined to avoid a collision with Italy, merely agreed to allow our ships the use of her arsenals.

The speech of Sir Samuel Hoare to the Assembly on September n proclaimed that England meant business. ** The League stands, and my country stands with it, for the collective maintenance of the Covenant in its entirety, and particukrly for steady and collective resistance to all acts of unprovoked aggression. … No selfish or Imperialist motives enter into our minds at all/' The impression produced both